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FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4185

INFO RUCNIRA/IRAN COLLECTIVE

RUCNISL/ISLAMIC COLLECTIVE

RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 2157

RUEHLM/AMEMBASSY COLOMBO 5448

RUEHKA/AMEMBASSY DHAKA 5463

RUEHIL/AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD 8450

RUEHBUL/AMEMBASSY KABUL 2915

RUEHKT/AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU 6129

RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON 9983

RUEHMO/AMEMBASSY MOSCOW 8513

RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 3344

RUEHCI/AMCONSUL CALCUTTA 4024

RUEHCG/AMCONSUL CHENNAI 3937

RUEHKP/AMCONSUL KARACHI 4018

RUEHLH/AMCONSUL LAHORE 2649

RUEHBI/AMCONSUL MUMBAI 3196

RUEHPW/AMCONSUL PESHAWAR 3305

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 NEW DELHI 003549

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 05/22/2016

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PTER](#) [PINR](#) [PBTS](#) [MOPS](#) [KISL](#) [PK](#) [IN](#)

SUBJECT: AGAINST BACKDROP OF KASHMIR TERROR, HURRIYAT
REJECTS DIALOGUE WITH PRIME MINISTER

NEW DELHI 00003549 001.2 OF 003

Classified By: PolCouns Geoff Pyatt for Reasons 1.4 (B, D)

¶1. Summary: Terrorists killed seven and injured scores more in a spectacular mid-day May 21 attack on a Congress party rally in downtown Srinagar. The next day, even as more grenades exploded in Srinagar, the peaceful separatist All Party Hurriyat Conference led by Mirwaiz Omar Farooq rejected an invitation to meet with the Prime Minister during his planned May 24 visit to Srinagar. The Prime Minister is being urged by political parties across the spectrum to stick with plans to meet a roundtable of J&K state activists in an effort to continue Delhi's dialogue process and defy terrorists. The Hurriyat's rejection of dialogue with Manmohan Singh -- who was amenable to any formula that would allow them to participate -- will further dilute their eroded standing in Kashmir. The terrorists are also diminishing what little support they had left with their brutal tactics, even as they try to undermine the PM's efforts at dialogue. The latest outrage in Kashmir will arm Delhi security hawks who doubt the wisdom of Manmohan Singh's Pakistan outreach strategy. End Summary.

TERRORISM CONTINUES UNABATED

¶2. (SBU) Terrorism in Kashmir has re-started with a bang now that snows are melting and mountainous infiltration routes are passable. Following the massacre of 35 Hindus in Doda April 30/May 1, terrorists dressed as Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) state police sprayed bullets at a crowd participating in a

Congress party rally in downtown Srinagar on May 21, killing seven and wounding dozens more, including a very senior police official who is a key Embassy contact. The Sunday attack on a major rally commemorating Rajiv Gandhi's death anniversary, played out all across India on live TV on several news networks, reminding the Delhi security establishment and Indians of all walks of life that terror still has not dissipated from the Kashmiri political scene.

¶3. (C) Security sources later claimed the assailants were likely members of Lashkar-e-Tayiba or Al Mansoorian. One police contact told us the terrorists were not/not J&K police officers, although they were dressed as such. We also checked on the health of our key contact, Inspector General JK Rajinder, whose daughter told us the bullet wounds in his leg would heal. We are now following up to find out how such an egregious security breach occurred at a rally at which Chief Minister Ghulam Nabi Azad had been just about to participate (he missed the shooting because he decided at the last moment to have a bite to eat prior to joining the rally).

"IT'S THE ISI"

¶4. (SBU) The May 21 attack follows a series of grenade attacks in the Valley in the past week that has injured dozens. The latest attacks occurred May 22, injuring five in various locales of Srinagar. Authorities have also raided LeT hideouts and seized explosives and weapons, which suggests more attacks were in the pipeline. The rising crescendo of terrorist strikes follows a relatively quiet winter, and seemingly corresponds with the snow melt and consequent rise in infiltration. Defense Minister Pranab Mukherjee was plain

NEW DELHI 00003549 002.2 OF 003

about the possibility of ISI involvement when he told a reporter May 22 that "maybe" it was involved. Added Mukherjee, "In order to frustrate the peace process, terrorists want to demonstrate to the world that they exist. It's high time Pakistan stopped aiding and abetting them."

THE HURRIYAT DRAWS THE WRONG LESSON...

¶5. (C) May 21 is a day full of import for the moderate Hurriyat, because Mirwaiz' uncle was murdered on that day in 1990, while Bilal and Sajjad Lone's father was killed on May 21, 2001. Considering how close the Chief Minister came to being killed on May 21, 2006, and their own families' sacrifices for the cause, the Mirwaiz Hurriyat could have used the terrorists' actions as a justification for going ahead and meeting the Prime Minister on May 24 in Srinagar. Unfortunately, the Hurriyat announced May 22 it would not attend the Prime Minister's roundtable, dealing a blow to PM Singh's dialogue effort. In the end, it may very well have been the fear of themselves being killed that also stayed their hands.

...AND ITS INFLUENCE WANES

¶6. (C) The real reason for the Hurriyat's decision, we are told, is a threat from the mainstream National Conference of Omar Abdullah to quit the roundtable talks if the Hurriyat were given a separate meeting with the PM -- which had been planned as the face-saving way out for both the GOI and the Hurriyat. With the National Conference flexing its muscles following its strong showing at the April 24 by-elections and in the face of a deepening split between Congress and PDP over a sex scandal, the GOI was in a bind: lose Omar Abdullah or lose the Hurriyat. In the end, the PM could not afford to alienate a mainstream party and its elected Members of Parliament. Journalists in Srinagar said that the Home Ministry was still pressing for a separate meeting for the Hurriyat, but the National Conference had made the cost of

such a meeting much higher than anyone in Delhi was prepared to pay. The upshot for the Hurriyat is that it reinforced its image as a talking shop with no proven constituency. And now, the talking shop has offended its most important interlocutor, the PM.

TERRORISTS THE ONLY WINNERS

17. (C) COMMENT: The only winners in this latest round of Kashmir intrigues are the terrorists. They scared the heck out of the Congress, the PM, and the Chief Minister, proved that VIP security in Srinagar is weak, soured the mood on the eve of the PM's roundtable talks, and further polarized Kashmiris. The Prime Minister's dialogue with the Hurriyat is on hold for the foreseeable future, and their absence from the roundtable process may not give Kashmiris confidence. Meanwhile, the National Conference has cut the Mirwaiz Hurriyat down at least a couple of notches. For the PM and his relentless vision for peace with Pakistan, these developments will be a discouragement. For his opponents in Delhi, the last 48 hours' events prove their contention that peace with Pakistan is folly as long as Pakistan launches proxy war against India using terror. With Siachen talks

NEW DELHI 00003549 003.2 OF 003

starting again May 23, the current political climate makes it harder for Manmohan Singh to make any concessions to Pakistan. In that regard, the terrorists and the people who orchestrate their bloody acts have succeeded famously. END

COMMENT.

MULFORD